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ENGLAND

AND

IRELAND

BY

JOHN STUART MILL

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LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, READER, AND DYER

1868

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ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

ONCE at least in every generation the question, "What is to be done with Ireland?" rises again to perplex the councils and trouble the conscience of the British nation. It has now risen more formidable than ever, and with the further aggravation, that it was unexpected. Irish disaffection, assuredly, is a familiar fact; and there have always been those among us who liked to explain it by a special taint or infirmity in the Irish character. But Liberal Englishmen had always attributed it to the multitude of unredressed wrongs. England had for ages, from motives of different degrees of unworthiness, made her yoke heavy upon Ireland. According to a well known computation, the whole land of the island had been confiscated three times over. Part had been taken to enrich powerful Englishmen and their Irish adherents; part to form the endowment of a hostile hierarchy; the rest had been given away to English and Scotch colonists, who held, and were intended to hold it, as a garrison against the Irish. The manufactures of Ireland, except the linen manufacture, which was chiefly carried on by these colonists, were deliberately crushed for the avowed purpose of making more room for those of England. The vast majority

of the native Irish, all who professed the Roman Catholic religion, were, in violation of the faith pledged to the Catholic army at Limerick, despoiled of all their political and most of their civil rights, and were left in existence only to plough or dig the ground, and pay rent to their task-masters. A nation which treats its subjects in this fashion cannot well expect to be loved by them. It is not necessary to discuss the circumstances of extenuation which an advocate might more or less justly urge to excuse these iniquities to the English conscience. Whatever might be their value in our own eyes, in those of the Irish they had not, and could not have, any extenuating virtue. Short of actual depopulation and desolation, or the direct personal enslaving of the inhabitants, little was omitted which could give a people cause to execrate its conquerors. But these just causes of disloyalty, it was at last thought, had been removed. The jealousy of Irish industry and enterprise has long ceased, and all inequality of commercial advantages between the two countries has been done away with. The civil rights of the Catholic population have been restored to them, and (with one or two trifling exceptions) their political disabilities have been taken off. The prizes of professional and of political life, in Ireland, England, and every British dependency, have been thrown open, in law and in fact, to Catholic as well as Protestant Irish. The alien Church indeed remains, but is no longer supported by a levy from the Catholic tillers of the soil ; it has become a charge on the rent paid by them, mostly to Protestant landlords. The confiscations have not been reversed ; but the hand of time has passed over them : they have reached the stage at

which, in the opinion of reasonable men, the reversal of an injustice is but an injustice the more. The representatives of the Irish Catholics are a power in the House of Commons, sufficient at times to hold the balance of parties. Irish complaints, great and small, are listened to with patience, if not always with respect; and when they admit of a remedy which seems reasonable to English minds, there is no longer any reluctance to apply it. What, then, it is thought even by Liberal Englishmen, has Ireland to resent? What, indeed, remains from which resentment could arise? By dint of believing that disaffection had ceased to be reasonable, they came to think that it had ceased to be possible. All grievances, of a kind to exasperate the ruled against the rulers, had, they thought, disappeared. Nature, too, not in her kinder, but in one of her cruellest moods, had made it her study to relieve the conscience of the English rulers of Ireland. A people of whom, according to the Report of a Royal Commission, two millions and a half were for many weeks of each year in a state of chronic starvation, were a sight which might cause some misgiving in a nation that had absolute power over them. But the Angel of Death had stepped in, and removed that spectre from before our gate. An appalling famine, followed by an unexampled and continuous emigration, had, by thinning the labour market, alleviated that extreme indigence which, by making the people desperate, might embitter them, we thought, even against a mild and just Government. Ireland was now not only well governed, but prosperous and improving. Surely the troubles of the British nation about Ireland were now at an end.

It is upon a people, or at least upon upper and middle classes, basking in this fool's paradise, that Fenianism has burst, like a clap of thunder in a clear sky, unlooked for and unintelligible, and has found them utterly unprepared to meet it and to deal with it. The disaffection which they flattered themselves had been cured, suddenly shows itself more intense, more violent, more unscrupulous, and more universal than ever. The population is divided between those who wish success to Fenianism, and those who, though disapproving its means and perhaps its ends, sympathize in its embittered feelings. Repressed by force in Ireland itself, the rebellion visits us in our own homes, scattering death among those who have given no provocation but that of being English-born. So deadly is the hatred, that it will run all risks merely to do us harm, with little or no prospect of any consequent good to itself. Our rulers are helpless to deal with this new outburst of enmity, because they are unable to see that anything on their part has given cause for it. They are brought face to face with a spirit which will as little tolerate what we think our good government as our bad, and they have not been trained to manage problems of that difficulty. But though their statesmanship is at fault, their conscience is at ease, because the rebellion, they think, is not one of grievance or suffering; it is a rebellion for an idea—the idea of nationality. Alas for the self-complacent ignorance of irresponsible rulers, be they monarchs, classes, or nations! If there is anything sadder than the calamity itself, it is the unmistakeable sincerity and good faith with which numbers of Englishmen confess themselves incapable of compre-

hending it. They know not that the disaffection which neither has nor needs any other motive than aversion to the rulers, is the climax to a long growth of disaffection arising from causes that might have been removed. What seems to them the causelessness of the Irish repugnance to our rule, is the proof that they have almost let pass the last opportunity they are ever likely to have of setting it right. They have allowed what once was indignation against particular wrongs, to harden into a passionate determination to be no longer ruled on any terms by those to whom they ascribe all their evils. Rebellions are never really unconquerable until they have become rebellions for an idea. Revolt against practical ill-usage may be quelled by concessions ; but wait till all practical grievances have merged in the demand for independence, and there is no knowing that any concession, short of independence, will appease the quarrel.

But what, it will be asked, is the provocation that England is giving to Ireland, now that she has left off crushing her commerce and persecuting her religion ? What harm to Ireland does England intend, or knowingly inflict ? What good, that she knows how to give her, would she not willingly bestow ? Unhappily, her offence is precisely that she does not know ; and is so well contented with not knowing, that Irishmen who are not hostile to her are coming to believe that she will not and cannot learn. Calm men, like the clerical authors of the Limerick declaration, who disapprove of Fenianism and of all that the Fenians are doing, and who have no preference for separation in itself, are expressing a deliberate conviction that the English nation *cannot* see or understand

what laws and institutions are necessary for a state of society and civilization like that of Ireland. The English people ought to ask themselves, seriously and without prejudice, what it is that gives sober men this opinion of them ; and endeavour to remove it, or humbly confess that it is true, and fulfil the only duty which remains performable by them on that supposition, that of withdrawing from the attempt.

That this desperate form of disaffection, which does not demand to be better governed, which asks us for no benefit, no redress of grievances, not even any reparation for injuries, but simply to take ourselves off and rid the country of our presence—that this revolt of mere nationality has been so long in coming, proves that it might have been prevented from coming at all. More than a generation has elapsed since we renounced the desire to govern Ireland for the English : if at that epoch we had begun to know how to govern her for herself, the two nations would by this time have been one. But we neither knew, nor knew that we did not know. We had got a set of institutions of our own, which we thought suited us—whose imperfections we were, at any rate, used to : we, or our ruling classes, thought, that there could be no boon to any country equal to that of imparting those institutions to her, and as none of their benefits were any longer withheld from Ireland, Ireland, it seemed, could have nothing more to desire. What was not too bad for us, must be good enough for Ireland, or if not, Ireland or the nature of things was alone in fault.

It is always a most difficult task which a people assumes when it attempts to govern, either in the way

of incorporation or as a dependency, another people very unlike itself. But whoever reflects on the constitution of society in these two countries, with any sufficient knowledge of the states of society which exist elsewhere, will be driven, however unwillingly, to the conclusion, that there is probably no other nation of the civilized world, which, if the task of governing Ireland had happened to devolve on it, would not have shown itself more capable of that work than England has hitherto done. The reasons are these: First, there is no other civilized nation which is so conceited of its own institutions, and of all its modes of public action, as England is; and secondly, there is no other civilized nation which is so far apart from Ireland in the character of its history, or so unlike it in the whole constitution of its social economy; and none, therefore, which if it applies to Ireland the modes of thinking and maxims of government which have grown up within itself, is so certain to go wrong.

The first indeed of our disqualifications, our conceit of ourselves, is certainly diminishing. Our governing classes are now quite accustomed to be told that the institutions which they thought must suit all mankind since they suited us, require far greater alteration than they dream of to be fit even for ourselves. When they were told this, they have long been in the habit of answering, that whatever defects these institutions may have in theory, they are suited to the opinions, the feelings, and the historical antecedents of the English people. But mark how little they really mean by this vindication. If suitability to the opinions, feelings, and historical antecedents of those

who live under them is the best recommendation of institutions, it ought to have been remembered, that the opinions, feelings, and historical antecedents of the Irish people are totally different from, and in many respects contrary to those of the English ; and that things which in England find their chief justification in their being liked, cannot admit of the same justification in a country where they are detested. But the reason which recommends institutions to their own supporters, and that which is used to stop the mouths of opponents, are far from being always one and the same.

Let us take as an example, that one of our institutions which has the most direct connexion with the worst practical grievances of Ireland ; absolute property in land, the land being engrossed by a comparatively small number of families. I am not going to discuss this institution, or to express, on the present occasion, any opinion about its abstract merits. Let these, if we will, be transcendent—let it be the best and highest form of agricultural and social economy, for anything I mean to say to the contrary. But I do say that this is not self-evident. It is not one of the truths which shine so brilliantly by their own light, that they are assented to by every sane man the moment he understands the words in which they are conveyed. On the contrary, what present themselves the most obviously at the first aspect of this institution are the objections to it. That a man should have absolute control over what his own labour and skill have created, and even over what he has received by gift or bequest from those who created it, is recommended by reasons of a very obvious charac-

ter, and does not shock any natural feeling. Moveable property can be produced in indefinite quantity, and he who disposes as he likes of anything which, it can fairly be argued, would not have existed but for him, does no wrong to any one. It is otherwise with regard to land, a thing which no man made, which exists in limited quantity, which was the original inheritance of all mankind, and which whoever appropriates, keeps others out of its possession. Such appropriation, when there is not enough left for all, is at the first aspect, an usurpation on the rights of other people. And though it is manifestly just that he who sows should be allowed to reap, this justice, which is the true moral foundation of property in land, avails little in favour of proprietors who reap but do not sow, and who assume the right of ejecting those who do. When the general condition of the land of a country is such as this, its title to the submission and attachment of those whom it seems to disinherit, is by no means obvious. It is a state of things which has great need of extrinsic recommendations. It requires to be rooted in the traditions and oldest recollections of the people; the landed families must be identified with the religion of the country, with its nationality, with its ancient rulers, leaders, defenders, teachers, and other objects of gratitude and veneration, or at least of ungrudging obedience.

These conditions have been found, in some considerable measure, or at all events, nothing contrary to them has been found, for many centuries, in England. All that is most opposite to them has at all times existed in Ireland. The traditions and recollections of native Irish society are wholly the

contrary way. Before the Conquest, the Irish people knew nothing of absolute property in land. The land virtually belonged to the entire sept; the chief was little more than the managing member of the association. The feudal idea, which views all rights as emanating from a head landlord, came in with the Conquest, was associated with foreign dominion, and has never to this day been recognised by the moral sentiments of the people. Originally the offspring not of industry but of spoliation, the right has not been allowed to purify itself by protracted possession, but has passed from the original spoliators to others by a series of fresh spoliations, so as to be always connected with the latest and most odious oppressions of foreign invaders. In the moral feelings of the Irish people, the right to hold the land goes, as it did in the beginning, with the right to till it. Since the last confiscations, nearly all the land has been owned from generation to generation with a more absolute ownership than exists in almost any other country (except England), by landlords (mostly foreigners, and nearly all of a foreign religion) who had less to do with tilling it, who had less connexion with it of any useful kind—or indeed of any kind, for a large proportion did not even reside on it—than the landowners of any other known country. There are parts of Europe, such as East Prussia, where the land is chiefly owned in large estates, but where almost every landowner farms his own land. In Ireland, until a recent period, any one who knew the country might almost have counted those who did anything for their estate but consume its produce. The landlords were a mere burthen on the land. The whole rental of the country was wasted

in maintaining, often in reckless extravagance, people who were not nearly as useful to the hive as the drones are, and were entitled to less respect. These are the antecedents of Irish history in respect to property in land. Let any Englishman put himself in the position of an Irish peasant, and ask himself whether, if the case were his own, the landed property of the country would have any sacredness to his feelings. Even the Whiteboy and the Rockite, in their outrages against the landlord, fought for, not against, the sacredness of what was property in their eyes; for it is not the right of the rent-receiver, but the right of the cultivator, with which the idea of property is connected in the Irish popular mind.

These facts being notorious, and the feelings engendered by them being, in part at least, perfectly reasonable in the eyes of every civilized people in the world except England, it is a characteristic specimen of the practical good sense by which England is supposed to be distinguished, that she should persist to this hour in forcing upon a people with such feelings, and such antecedents, her own idea of absolute property in land. If those who created English manufactures, commerce, navigation, and dominion, to say nothing of English literature and science, had gone to work in this style—had shown this amount of judgment in the adaptation of means to ends—England would at the present time have been in something like the condition of the Papal territory, or of Spain.

Thus much as to the harmony of certain English institutions with the feelings and prepossessions of the Irish people, which, according to the received doctrine of our historical Conservatives, is the first point

to be considered in either retaining old institutions or introducing new. But now, apart from the question of acceptability to Ireland, let us consider whether our own laws and usages, at least in relation to land, are the model we should even desire to follow in governing Ireland; whether the circumstances of the two countries are sufficiently similar, to warrant the belief, that things which may work well, or may not be fatally destructive to prosperity, in England, will be useful or innocuous, even if voluntarily accepted by the people of the neighbouring island.

What are the main features in the social economy of Ireland? First, it is a country wholly agricultural. The entire population, with some not very important exceptions, cultivates the soil, or depends for its subsistence on cultivation. In this respect, if all the countries of Europe except Russia were arranged in a scale, Ireland would be at one extremity of the scale, England and Scotland at the other. In Great Britain, not more than a third of the population subsists by agriculture. In most countries of the Continent a great majority do so, though in no country but Russia so great a majority as in Ireland. Ireland, therefore, in this essential particular, bears more resemblance to almost any other country in Europe than she does to Great Britain.

When the agricultural population are but a fraction of the entire people; when the commercial and manufacturing development of the country leaves a large opening for the children of the agriculturists to seek and find subsistence elsewhere than on the soil; a bad tenure of land, though always mischievous, can in some measure be borne with. But when a people

have no means of sustenance but the land, the conditions on which the land can be occupied, and support derived from it, are all in all. Now, under an apparent resemblance, those conditions are radically different in Ireland and in England. In England the land is rented and cultivated by capitalist farmers; in Ireland, except in the grazing districts, principally by manual labourers, or small farmers in nearly the same condition in life. The multitude of other differences which flow from this one difference, it would be too prolix to detail. But (what is still more important), in Ireland, where the well-being of the whole population depends on the terms on which they are permitted to occupy the land, those terms are the very worst in Europe. There are many other countries in which the land is owned principally in large masses, and farmed in great part by manual labourers. But I doubt if there be now any other part of Europe where, as a general rule, these farm-labourers are entirely without a permanent interest in the soil. The serfs certainly were not; they could not be turned out of their holdings. The *métayers* in France, before the Revolution, could; and their wretchedness, accordingly, was the bye-word of Europe. There are still *métayers* in France, but those of them who have not, as many have, other land of their own in full property, are still the disturbing element of rural society. The departments which returned Socialist deputies to the Assemblies of 1848 and 1849 were chiefly those in which *métayerism* still lingered. The *métayers* of Italy are, by a custom, as binding as law, irremovable so long as they fulfil their contract. The Prussian peasants, even before the beneficent enfran-

chising legislation of Stein and Hardenberg, had positive rights in the soil which they could not be deprived of. It is only in parts of Belgium that it is a frequent practice for small farmers to hold from large proprietors, with no other legal protection than the stipulations of a short lease: but their truly admirable industry owes its vigour to the fact that small landed properties are always to be had for money, at prices which they can hope to save. They, moreover, live in the midst of a large and thriving manufacturing industry, which takes off the hands that might otherwise compete unduly for the soil. In Ireland alone the whole agricultural population can be evicted by the mere will of the landlord, either at the expiration of a lease, or, in the far commoner case of their having no lease, at six months' notice. In Ireland alone the bulk of a population dependent wholly on the land, cannot look forward with confidence to a single year's occupation of it: while the sole outlet for the dispossessed cultivators, or for those whose competition raises the rents against the cultivators, is expatriation. So long as they remain in the country of their birth, their support must be drawn from a source for the permanence of which they have no guarantee, and the failure of which leaves them nothing to depend on but the poor-house.

In one circumstance alone England and Ireland are alike: the cultivated area of both countries is owned in large estates by a small class of great landlords. In the opinion of great landlords, and of the admirers of the state of society which produces them, this is enough: the interest and the wisdom of the landlords may be implicitly relied on for making everybody

comfortable. Great landlords can do as they like with their estates, on this side of St. George's Channel; English landlords are absolute masters of the conditions on which they will let their land; and why should not Irish landlords be so? But in the first place, English landlords do not let their land to a labourer, but to a capitalist farmer, who is able to take care of his own interest. The capitalist has not to choose between the possession of a farm and destitution; the labourer has. This element subverts the whole basis on which the letting of farms, as a business transaction, and the foundation of a national economy, requires to rest. The capitalist farmer will beware of offering a rent that will leave him no profit; the peasant farmer will promise any amount of rent, whether he can pay it or not. England, moreover, not being a purely agricultural, but a commercial country, even great landlords learn to look at the management of estates in a somewhat commercial spirit, and can see their own advantage (where the love of political influence does not prevent) in making it the interest of the tenant to improve the land; or, if they can afford to do so, will often improve it for him. An average Irish landlord, instead of improving his estate, does not even put up the fences and farm-buildings which everywhere else it is the landlord's business to provide; they are left to be erected by the labourer-tenant for himself, and are such as a labourer-tenant is able to erect. If a tenant here and there is able and willing to make them a little better than ordinary, or to add in any other manner to the productiveness and value of the farm, there is nothing to prevent the landlord from waiting till it

is done, and then seizing on the result, or requiring from the tenant additional rent for the use of the fruits of his own labour; and so many landlords even of high rank are not ashamed to do this, that it is evident their compeers do not think it at all disgraceful. It is usual to impute the worst abuses of Irish landlordism to middlemen. Middlemen are rapidly dying out, but there was lately a middleman in the county of Clare, under whose landlordship Irish peasants, by their labour and their scanty means, reclaimed a considerable tract on the sea-coast, and founded thereon the flourishing watering-place of Kilkee. The middleman died, his lease fell in, and the tenants fancied that they should now be still better off; but the head landlord, the Marquis Conyngham, at once put on rents equal to the full value of the improvements (in some instances an increase of 700 per cent), and not content with this, pulled down a considerable portion of the town, reduced its population from 1879 to 950, and drove out the remainder to wander about Ireland, or to England or America, and swell the ranks of the bitter enemies of Great Britain.* Did the interest, any more than the good feelings, of this landlord, prevent him from destroying this remarkable creation of industry, and giving its creators cause bitterly to repent that they had ever made it? What might not be hoped from a people who had the energy and enterprise to create a flourishing town under

* The outline of these facts is matter of public notoriety. For details, far more impressive than I have ventured to quote, the reader may refer to the pamphlet of the Rev. Sylvester Malone, "Tenant-Wrong Illustrated in a Nutshell; or, a History of Kilkee in Relation to Landlordism during the last Seven Years."

liability to be robbed? And to what sympathy or consideration are those entitled who avail themselves of a bad law to perpetrate what is morally robbery?

When Irishmen ask to be protected against deeds of this description, they are told that the law they complain of is the same which exists in England. What signifies it that the law is the same, if opinion and the social circumstances of the country are better than the law, and prevent the oppression which the law permits? It is bad that one *can* be robbed in due course of law, but it is greatly worse when one actually is. England, with her capitalist farmers and her powerful public opinion, can afford to leave improper power in the hands of her great landlords—not, indeed, without serious evil to her agricultural population, the state of which is generally felt to be the most peccant part of her social condition; not without evil to all over whom power is exercised through the votes of that population; but yet without hindrance to the attainment, by the nation as a whole, of great wealth and prosperity. Ireland is very differently circumstanced. When, as a general rule, the land of a country is farmed by the very hands that till it, the social economy resulting is intolerable, unless either by law or custom the tenant is protected against arbitrary eviction, or arbitrary increase of rent. Nor is there any country of Western Europe save England (unless Spain be an exception) which, if Ireland had belonged to it, would not before this time have seen and acted on that principle; because there is not one which is not familiar with the principle and its bearings, from ample experience. England alone is without such experience of its own, and knows and cares

too little about foreign countries to benefit by theirs.

At a particular moment of the revolutionary war, a French armament, led by the illustrious Hoche, was only prevented by stress of weather from effecting a landing in Ireland. At that moment it was on the cards whether Ireland should not belong to France, or at least be organized as an independent country under French protection. Had this happened, does any one believe that the Irish peasant would not have become even as the French peasant? When the great landowners had fled, as they would have fled, to England, every farm on their estates would have become the property of the occupant, subject to some fixed payment to the State. Ireland would then have been in the condition in which small farming, and tenancy by manual labourers, are consistent with good agriculture and public prosperity. The small holder would have laboured for himself and not for others, and his interest would have coincided with the interest of the country in making every plot of land produce its utmost. What Hoche would have done for the Irish peasant, or its equivalent, has still to be done; and any government which will not do it does not fulfil the rational and moral conditions of a government. There is no necessity that it should be done as Hoche would most likely have done it, without indemnity to the losers. A few years ago it might not have been necessary to do as much as he would have done. The distribution of the waste land in peasant properties might then have sufficed. Perhaps even such small measures as that of securing to tenants a moderate compensation, in money or by

length of lease, for improvements actually made, and abolishing the unjust privilege of distraining for rent, might have appeased or postponed disaffection, and given to great-landlordism a fresh term of existence. But such reforms as these, granted at the last moment, would hardly give a week's respite from active disaffection. The Irish are no longer reduced to take anything they can get. They have acquired the sense of being supported by prosperous multitudes of their countrymen on the opposite side of the Atlantic. These it is who will furnish the leaders, the pecuniary resources, the skill, the military discipline, and a great part of the effective force, in any future Irish rebellion: and it is the interest of these auxiliaries to refuse to listen to any form of compromise, since no share of its benefits would be for them, while they would lose the dream of a place in the world's eye as chiefs of an independent republic. With these for leaders, and a people like the Irish, always ready to trust implicitly those whom they think hearty in their cause, no accommodation is henceforth possible which does not give the Irish peasant all that he could gain by a revolution—permanent possession of the land, subject to fixed burthens. Such a change may be revolutionary; but revolutionary measures are the thing now required. It is not necessary that the revolution should be violent, still less that it should be unjust. It may and it ought to respect existing pecuniary interests which have the sanction of law. An equivalent ought to be given for the bare pecuniary value of all mischievous rights which landlords or any others are required to part with. But no mercy ought to be shown to the mischievous

rights themselves; no scruples of purely English birth ought to stay our hands from effecting, since it has come to that, a real revolution in the economical and social constitution of Ireland. In the completeness of the revolution will lie its safety. Anything less than complete, unless as a step to completion, will give no help. There has been a time for proposals to effect this change by a gradual process, by encouragement of voluntary arrangements; but the volume of the Sibyl's books which contained them has been burned. If ever, in our time, Ireland is to be a consenting party to her union with England, the changes must be so made that the existing generation of Irish farmers shall at once enter upon their benefits. The rule of Ireland now rightfully belongs to those who, by means consistent with justice, will make the cultivators of the soil of Ireland the owners of it; and the English nation has got to decide whether it will be that just ruler or not.

Englishmen are not always incapable of shaking off insular prejudices, and governing another country according to its wants, and not according to common English habits and notions. It is what they have had to do in India; and those Englishmen who know something of India, are even now those who understand Ireland best. Persons who know both countries, have remarked many points of resemblance between the Irish and the Hindoo character; there certainly are many between the agricultural economy of Ireland and that of India. But, by a fortunate accident, the business of ruling India in the name of England did not rest with the Houses of Parliament or the offices at Westminster; it devolved on men

who passed their lives in India, and made Indian interests their professional occupation. There was also the advantage, that the task was laid upon England after nations had begun to have a conscience, and not while they were sunk in the reckless savagery of the middle ages. The English rulers, accordingly, reconciled themselves to the idea that their business was not to sweep away the rights they found established, or wrench and compress them into the similitude of something English, but to ascertain what they were; having ascertained them, to abolish those only which were absolutely mischievous; otherwise to protect them, and use them as a starting point for further steps in improvement. This work of stripping off their preconceived English ideas was at first done clumsily and imperfectly, and at the cost of many mistakes; but as they honestly meant to do it, they in time succeeded, and India is now governed, if with a large share of the ordinary imperfections of rulers, yet with a full perception and recognition of its differences from England. What has been done for India has now to be done for Ireland; and as we should have deserved to be turned out of the one, had we not proved equal to the need, so shall we to lose the other.

It is not consistent with self-respect, in a nation any more than in an individual, to wait till it is compelled by uncontrollable circumstances to resign that which it cannot in conscience hold. Before allowing its government to involve it in another repetition of the attempt to maintain English dominion over Ireland by brute force, the English nation ought to commune with its conscience, and solemnly reconsider its position. If England is unable to learn what has to

be learnt, and unlearn what has to be unlearnt, in order to make her rule willingly accepted by the Irish people; or, to look at the hypothesis on its other side, if the Irish are incapable of being taught the superiority of English notions about the way in which they ought to be governed, and obstinately persist in preferring their own; if this supposition, whichever way we choose to turn it, is true, are we the power which, according to the general fitness of things and the rules of morality, ought to govern Ireland? If so, what are we dreaming of, when we give our sympathy to the Poles, the Italians, the Hungarians, the Servians, the Greeks, and I know not how many other oppressed nationalities? On what principle did we act when we renounced the government of the Ionian Islands?

It is not to fear of consequences, but to a sense of right, that one would wish to appeal on this most momentous question. Yet it is not impertinent to say, that to hold Ireland permanently by the old bad means is simply impossible. Neither Europe nor America would now bear the sight of a Poland across the Irish Channel. Were we to attempt it, and a rebellion, so provoked, could hold its ground but for a few weeks, there would be an explosion of indignation all over the civilized world; on this single occasion Liberals and Catholics would be unanimous; Papal volunteers and Garibaldians would fight side by side against us for the independence of Ireland, until the many enemies of British prosperity had time to complicate the situation by a foreign war. Were we even able to prevent a rebellion, or suppress it the moment it broke out, the holding down by military

violence of a people in desperation, constantly struggling to break their fetters, is a spectacle which Russia is still able to give to mankind, because Russia is almost inaccessible to a foreign enemy; but the attempt could not long succeed with a country so vulnerable as England, having territories to defend in every part of the globe, and half her population dependent on foreign commerce. Neither do I believe that the mass of the British people, those who are not yet corrupted by power, would permit the attempt. The prophets who, judging, I presume, from themselves, always augur the worst of the moral sentiments of their countrymen, are already asseverating that, whether right or wrong, the British people would rather devastate Ireland from end to end and root out its inhabitants, than consent to its separation from England. If we believe them, the people of England are a kind of bloodhounds, always ready to break loose and perpetrate Jamaica horrors, unless they, and their like, are there to temper and restrain British brutality. This representation does not accord with my experience. I believe that these prophecies proceed from men who seek to make their countrymen responsible for what they themselves are burning to commit; and that the rising power in our affairs, the democracy of Great Britain, is opposed, on principle, to holding any people in subjection against their will. The question was put, some six months ago, to one of the largest and most enthusiastic public meetings ever assembled in London under one roof—"Do you think that England has a right to rule over Ireland if she cannot make the Irish people content with her rule?" and the shouts of "No!" which burst from

every part of that great assemblage, will not soon be forgotten by those who heard them. An age when delegates of working men meet in European Congresses to concert united action for the interests of labour, is not one in which labourers will cut down labourers at other people's bidding. The time is come when the democracy of one country will join hands with the democracy of another, rather than back their own ruling authorities in putting it down. I shall not believe, until I see it proved, that the English and Scotch people are capable of the folly and wickedness of carrying fire and sword over Ireland in order that their rulers may govern Ireland contrary to the will of the Irish people. That they would put down a partial outbreak, in order to get a fair trial for a system of government beneficent and generally acceptable to the people, I readily believe; nor should I in any way blame them for so doing.

Let it not, however, be supposed that I should regard either an absolute or a qualified separation of the two countries, otherwise than as a dishonour to one, and a serious misfortune to both. It would be a deep disgrace to us, that having the choice of, on the one hand, a peaceful legislative revolution in the laws and rules affecting the relation of the inhabitants to the soil, or on the other, of abandoning a task beyond our skill, and leaving Ireland to rule herself, incapacity for the better of the two courses should drive us to the worse. For that it would be greatly the worse even for Ireland, many Irishmen, even Irish Catholics, are probably still calm enough to perceive, if but good government can be had without it.

The mere geographical situation of the two coun-

tries makes them far more fit to exist as one nation than as two. Not only are they more powerful for defence against a foreign enemy combined than separate, but, if separate, they would be a standing menace to one another. Parted at the present time and with their present feelings, the two islands would be, of all countries in Europe, those which would have the most hostile disposition towards one another. Too much bitter feeling still remains between England and the United States, more than eighty years after separation ; and Ireland has suffered from England for many centuries, evils compared with which the greatest grievances of the Americans were, in all but their principle, insignificant. The persevering reciprocation of insults between English and American newspapers and public speakers has, before now, brought those two countries to the verge of a war ; would there not be even more of this between countries still nearer neighbours, on the morrow of an unfriendly separation ? In the perpetual state of irritated feeling thus kept up, trifles would become causes of quarrel. Disputes more or less serious, even collisions, would be for ever liable to occur. Ireland, therefore, besides having to defend herself against all other enemies, internal and external, without English help, would feel obliged to keep herself always armed and in readiness to fight England. An Irishman must have a very lofty idea of the resources of his country who thinks that this load upon the Irish taxpayer would be easily borne. A war-tax assessed upon the soil, for want of other taxable material, would be no small set-off against what the peasant would gain even by the entire cessation of rent. The burthen of the necessity of being always prepared for

war, was no unimportant part of the motive which made the Northern States of America prefer a war at once to allowing the South to secede from the Union. Yet the necessity would not have weighed so heavily on them as it would on Ireland, because they were both the most powerful half of the American Union and the richest. To England, the necessity of being always in a state of preparation against Ireland would be comparatively a less inconvenience, because she already has to maintain, for defence against foreigners, a force that would in general suffice for both purposes. But Ireland would have to create both a fleet and an army; and, after all that could be done, so oppressive would be her sense of insecurity, that she would probably be driven to compromise her newly acquired independence, and seek the protection of alliances with Continental powers. From that moment she would, in addition to her own wars, be dragged into a participation in theirs. Were she to choose the smaller evil, and remain free from any permanent entanglement, all enemies of Great Britain would not the less confidently look forward to an Irish alliance, and to being allowed to use Ireland as a basis of attack against Great Britain. Ireland would probably become, like Belgium formerly, one of the battle-fields of European war: while she would be in not unreasonable fear lest England should anticipate the danger, by herself occupying Ireland with a military force at every commencement of hostilities. On the part of England, the pacific character which English policy has assumed precludes any probability of aggressive war; but the ejected Irish higher classes (for ejected they could scarcely fail to be) would form an element hostile to

Ireland on this side of the Irish Sea, which would be to the Irish Republic what the *émigrés* at Coblenz were to revolutionary France. In all this I am supposing that Ireland would succeed in establishing a regular and orderly government: but suppose that she failed? Suppose that she had to pass through an interval of partial anarchy first? What if there were a civil war between the Protestant and Catholic Irish, or between Ulster and the other provinces? Is it in human nature that the sympathies of England should not be principally with the English Protestant colony, and would not she either help that side, or be constantly believed to be on the point of helping it? For generations it is to be feared that the two nations would be either at war, or in a chronic state of precarious and armed peace, each constantly watching a probable enemy so near at hand that in an instant they might be at each other's throat. By this state of their relations it is almost superfluous to say that the poorer of the two countries would suffer most. To England it would be an inconvenience; to Ireland a public calamity, not only in the way of direct burthen, but by the paralyzing effect of a general feeling of insecurity upon industrial energy and enterprise.

But there is a contingency beyond all this, from the possibility of which we ought not to avert our eyes. Ireland might be invaded and conquered by a great military power. She might become a province of France. This is not the least likely thing to befall her, if her independence of England should be followed by protracted disorders, such as to make peaceably disposed persons welcome an armed pacificator capable of im-

posing on the conflicting parties a common servitude. How bitter such a result of all their struggles ought to be to patriotic Irishmen, I will not stop to show. But I ask any patriotic Englishman what he would think of such a prospect ; and whether he is disposed to run the risk of it, in order that a few hundred families of the upper classes may continue to possess the land of Ireland, instead of its pecuniary value.

All this evil, it may be thought, could be prevented by agreeing beforehand upon a close alliance and perpetual confederacy between the two nations. But is it likely that the party which had effected a separation in home affairs, would desire or consent to unity in foreign relations ? A confederacy is an agreement to have the same friends and enemies, and can only subsist between peoples who have the same interests and feelings, and who, if they fight at all, would wish to fight on the same side. Great Britain and Ireland, if all community of interest between them were cut off, would generally prefer to be on contrary sides. In any Continental complications, the sympathies of England would be with Liberalism ; while those of Ireland are sure to be on the same side as the Pope—that is, on the side opposed to modern civilization and progress, and to the freedom of all except Catholic populations held in subjection by non-Catholic rulers. Besides, America is the country with which we are at present in most danger of having serious difficulties ; and Ireland would be far more likely to confederate with America against us, than with us against America. Some may say that this difference of national feeling, if an obstacle to alliance, is, *à fortiori*, a condemnation of union. But even the most Catholic of

Irishmen may reasonably consider that Irish influence in the British Parliament is a great mitigator of British hostility to things with which Ireland sympathizes ; that a Pro-Catholic element in the House of Commons, which no English Government can venture to despise, helps to prevent the whole power of Great Britain from being in the hands of the Anti-Catholic element still so strong in England and Scotland. If there is any party in Great Britain which would not have cause to regret the separation of Ireland, it is the fanatical Protestant party. It may well be doubted if an independent Ireland could in any way give such effective support to any cause to which Ireland is attached, as by the forbearance and moderation which her presence in British councils imposes upon the power which would be likeliest, in case of conflict, to lead the van of the contrary side.

I see nothing that Ireland could gain by separation which might not be obtained by union, except the satisfaction, which she is thought to prize, of being governed solely by Irishmen—that is, almost always by men with a strong party animosity against some part of her population : unless indeed the stronger party began its career of freedom by driving the whole of the weaker party beyond the seas. In return, Irishmen would be shut out from all positions in Great Britain, except those which can be held by foreigners. There would be no more Irish prime-ministers, Irish commanders-in-chief, Irish generals and admirals in the British army and fleet. Not in Britain only, but in all Britain's dependencies—in India and the Colonies, Irishmen would henceforth be on the footing of strangers. The loss would exceed the gain, not only

by calculation, but in feeling. The first man in a small country would often gladly exchange positions with the fourth or fifth in a great one.

But why, it may be asked, cannot Ireland remain united with the British Crown by a mere personal tie, having the management of her own affairs, as Canada has, though a part of the same empire? Or why may not Great Britain and Ireland be joined as Austria and Hungary are, each with its own separate administration and legislature, and an equal voice in the joint concerns of both? I answer: The former of these relations would be to Ireland a derogation, a descent from even her present position. She is now at least a part of the governing country. She has something to say in the general affairs of the empire. Canada is but a dependency, with a provincial government, allowed to make its own laws and impose its taxes, but subject to the veto of the mother-country, and not consulted at all about alliances or wars, in which it is nevertheless compelled to join. A union such as this can only exist as a temporary expedient, between countries which look forward to separation as soon as the weaker is able to stand alone, and which care not much how soon it comes. This mode of union, moreover, is still recent; it has stood no trials; it has not yet been exposed to the greatest trial—that of war. Let war come, by an act of the British Government in which Canada is not represented, and from a motive in which Canada is not concerned, and how long will Canada be content to share the burthens and the dangers? Even in home affairs, Ireland would not relish the position of Canada. The veto of the Crown is virtually that of the British Parliament;

and though it might, as in the case of Canada, be discreetly confined to what were considered imperial questions, the decision what questions were imperial would rest with the country in whose councils Ireland would no longer have a voice. It is very improbable that the veto would stop at things which, in the opinion of the subordinate country, were proper subjects for it. Canada is a great way off, and British rulers can tolerate much in a place from which they are not afraid that the contagion may spread to England. But Ireland is marked out for union with England, if only by this, that nothing important can take place in the one without making its effects felt in the other. If the British Parliament could sufficiently shake off its prejudices to use the veto on Irish legislation rightly, it could shake them off sufficiently to legislate for Ireland rightly, or to allow the Irish, as it already allows the Scotch members, to transact the business of their own country mainly by themselves.

These objections would not apply to an equal union, like that which has recently been agreed upon between Austria and Hungary. In that there is nothing humiliating to the pride of either country. But if the Canadian system has had but a short trial, the dual system of Austria and Hungary has had none. It has existed only a bare twelvemonth. Hungary, it is true, has been much longer attached by a personal bond to the reigning family of Austria, and Hungary had a Constitution, with some of the elements of freedom; but Austria had not. The difficulty of keeping two countries together without uniting them, begins with constitutional liberty. Countries very dissimilar in character, and even with some internal

freedom, may be governed as England and Scotland were by the Stuarts, so long as the people have only certain limited rights, and the government of the two countries practically resides in a single will above them both. The difficulty arises when the unforced concurrence of both nations is required for the principal acts of their government. This relation, between Austria and Hungary, never existed till now. If an arrangement so untried and so unexampled be happily permanent—if it resist the chances of incurable difference of opinion on the subjects reserved for joint deliberation, foreign relations, finances, and war—its success will be owing to circumstances almost peculiar to the particular case, and which certainly do not exist between Great Britain and Ireland. In the first place, the two countries are nearly equal in military resources and prowess. They have fairly tried themselves against one another in open war, and know that neither can conquer the other without foreign aid. In the next place, while each is equally formidable to the other, each stands in need of the other for its own safety; neither is sufficient to itself for maintaining its independence against powerful and encroaching neighbours. Lastly, they do not start with hostile feelings in the masses of either country towards the other. Hungary has not the wrongs of centuries to revenge; her direct injuries from Austria never reached the labouring classes, but were confined to portions of society whose conduct is directed more by political interest than by vindictive feeling. The reverse of all this is true between Great Britain and Ireland. The most favourable of all combinations of circumstances for the success and permanence of an equal alliance between

independent nations under the same crown, exists between Hungary and Austria, the least favourable between England and Ireland. Nor let it be said that these reasons against an equal alliance are reasons *à fortiori* against union. The only one of them of which this could be said is the alienation of feeling, and this, if the real grounds of bitterness were removed, the close intercourse and community of interest engendered by union would more and more tend to heal: while the natural tendency of separation, either complete or only partial, would be to estrange the countries from each other more and more. It may be added, that the Hungarian population, which has so nobly achieved its independence, has been trained from of old in the management of the details of its affairs, and has shown, in very trying circumstances, a measure of the qualities which fit a people for self-government, greater than has yet been evinced by Continental nations in many other respects far more advanced. The democracy of Ireland, and those who are likely to be its first leaders, have, at all events, yet to prove their possession of qualities at all similar.

For these reasons it is my conviction that the separation of Ireland from Great Britain would be most undesirable for both, and that the attempt to hold them together by any form of federal union would be unsatisfactory while it lasted, and would end either in reconquest or in complete separation. But in however many respects Ireland might be a loser, she would be a gainer in one. Let separation be ever so complete a failure, one thing it would do: it would convert the peasant farmers into peasant proprietors: and this one thing would be more than an equivalent

for all that she would lose. The worst government that would give her this, would be more acceptable, and more deservedly acceptable, to the mass of the Irish people, than the best that withheld it; if goodness of any kind can be predicated of a Government that refuses the first and greatest benefit that can be conferred on such a country. This benefit, however, she can receive from the Government of the United Kingdom, if those who compose that government can be made to perceive that it is necessary and right. This duty once admitted and acted on, the difficulties of centuries in governing Ireland would disappear.

What the case requires is simply this. We have had commissions, under the authority of Parliament, to commute for an annual payment the burthen of tithe, and the variable obligations of copyholders. What is wanted in Ireland is a commission of a similar kind to examine every farm which is let to a tenant, and commute the present variable for a fixed rent. But this great undertaking must not drag its slow length through generations, like the work of those other commissions. The time is passed for a mere amicable mediation of the State between the landlord and the tenant. There must be compulsory powers, and a strictly judicial inquiry. It must be ascertained in each case, as promptly as is consistent with due investigation, what annual payment would be an equivalent to the landlord for the rent he now receives (provided that rent be not excessive) and for the present value of whatever prospect there may be of an increase, from any other source than the peasant's own exertions. This annual sum should be secured to the landlord, under the guarantee of the

State. He should have the option of receiving it directly from the national treasury, by being inscribed as the owner of Consols sufficient to yield the amount. Those landlords who are the least useful in Ireland, and on the worst terms with their tenantry, would probably accept this opportunity of severing altogether their connexion with the Irish soil. Whether this was the case or not, every farm not farmed by the proprietor would become the permanent holding of the existing tenant, who would pay either to the landlord or to the State the fixed rent which had been decided upon; or less, if the income which it was thought just that the landlord should receive were more than the tenant could reasonably be required to pay. The benefit, to the cultivator, of a permanent property in the soil, does not depend on paying nothing for it, but on the certainty that the payment cannot be increased; and it is not even desirable that, in the first instance, the payment should be less than a fair rent. If the land were let below its value, to this new kind of copyholder, he might be tempted to sublet it at a higher rent, and live on the difference, becoming a parasite supported in idleness on land which would still be farmed at a rackrent. He should therefore pay the full rent which was adjudged to the former proprietor, unless special circumstances made it unjust to require so much.* When such circumstances existed, the State

* This same provision meets the objection sometimes made, that the worst farmers at present are those who hold on long leases or in perpetuity. Such farmers would not long stand the test of being held strictly to payment of the full amount of what is now a fair rent. They would soon either change their habits or give place to others.

must lose the difference ; or if the Church property, after its resumption by the State, yielded a surplus beyond what is required for the secular education of the people, the remainder could not be better applied to the benefit of Ireland than in this manner.

We are told by many (I am sorry that Lord Stanley is one of them) that in a generation after such a change, the land of Ireland would be overcrowded by the growth of population, would be sublet and subdivided, and things would be as bad as before the famine. Just in the same manner we were told that after a generation or two of peasant proprietorship, the whole rural territory of France would be a pauper warren, and its inhabitants would be engaged in "dividing, by logarithms, infinitesimal inheritances." How have these predictions been fulfilled ? The complaint now is that the population of France scarcely increases at all, and the rural population diminishes. And, in spite of the compulsory division of inheritances by the Code Civil, the reunions of small properties by marriage and inheritance fully balance the subdivisions. The obsolete school of English political economists, whom I may call the Tory school, because they were the friends of entail, primogeniture, high rents, great landed properties, and aristocratic institutions generally, predicted that peasant proprietorships would lead not only to excessive population, but to the wretchedest possible agriculture. What has the fact proved ? I will not refer to the standard work on this subject, Mr. W. T. Thornton's "Plea for Peasant Proprietors," or to Mr. Kay's "Social Condition of the People in England and Europe," or to the multitude of authorities cited in my own Political

Economy, or to the more recent careful and thoughtful researches of M. Emile de Laveleye. I will quote from M. Léonce de Lavergne, at present the stock authority of the opponents of small landed properties. What says M de Lavergne in his latest production, an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 1st of December last? "As a general rule, the lands held "in small properties are twice as productive as the "others, so that if this element were to fail us, our "agricultural produce would be considerably diminished." Those who still believe that small peasant properties are either detrimental to agriculture or conducive to overpopulation, are discredibly behind the state of knowledge on the subject. There is no condition of landed property which excites such intense exertions for its improvement, as that in which all that can be added to the produce belongs to him who produces it. Nor does any condition afford so strong a motive against overpopulation; because it is much more obvious how many mouths can be supported by a piece of land, than how many hands can find employment in the general labour market. The danger of subletting is equally visionary. In the first place, subletting might be prohibited; but on the plan I propose there is no necessity for prohibiting it. If the holder, by his labour or outlay, adds to the value of the farm, he is well entitled to sublet it if he pleases. If its value augments from any other cause than his exertions, it will generally be from the increased prosperity of the country, which will be a proof that the new system is successful, and that he may sublet without inconvenience. Only one precaution is necessary. For years, perhaps for generations,

he should not be allowed to let the land by competition, or for a variable rent. His lessee must acquire it as he himself did, on a permanent tenure, at an unchangeable rent, fixed by public authority; that the substituted, like the original, holder may have the full interest of a proprietor in making the most of the soil.

All prognostics of failure drawn from the state of things preceding the famine are simply futile. The farmer, previous to the famine, was not proprietor of his bit of land; he was a cottier, at a nominal rent, puffed up by competition to a height far above what could, even under the most favourable circumstances, be paid, and the effect of which was that whether he gained much or little, beyond the daily potatoes of which his family could not be deprived, all was swept off for arrears of rent. Alone of all working people, the Irish cottier neither gained anything by industry and frugality, nor lost anything by idleness and reckless multiplication. That because he was not industrious and frugal without a motive, he will not be industrious and frugal when he has the strongest motive, is not a very plausible excuse for refusing him the chance. There is also another great change in his circumstances since the famine: the bridge to America has been built. If a population should grow up on the small estates more numerous than their produce can comfortably support, what is to prevent that surplus population from going the way of the millions who have already found in another continent the field for their labour which was not open to them at home? And the new emigrants, there would then be reason to hope, would not, as now, depart in bitterness, nor return in enmity.

The difficulty of governing Ireland lies entirely in our own minds; it is an incapability of understanding. When able to understand what justice requires, liberal Englishmen do not refuse to do it. They understood the injustice of the political disabilities of Catholics, and they removed them. They understand the injustice of endowing an alien Church, and they have made up their minds that the endowment shall no longer continue. Foreign nations and posterity will judge England's capacity for government, by the ability she now shows to overcome the difficulty of seeing what justice requires in the matter of Irish landed tenure. To her it is a difficulty. Other nations see no difficulty in it. To the Prussian Conservative, Von Raumer, and the French Liberal, Gustave de Beaumont, it was already, thirty years ago, the most obvious thing in the world. It will seem so to future generations. Posterity will hardly be just to the men of our time. The superstitions of landlordism once cast off, it will be difficult to imagine what real and deep-rooted superstitions they once were, and how much of the best moral and even intellectual attributes was compatible with them. But not the less is he in whom any principle or feeling has become a superstition, convulsively clung to where the reasons fail, unfit to have the power of imposing his superstition on people who do not share it. If we cannot distinguish the essentials from the accidents of landed property; if it is and must remain to us the Ark of the Covenant, which must be neither touched nor looked into, for however indispensable a need, it is our duty to retire from a country where a modification of the constitution of landed property is the primary neces-

sity of social life. It may be that there is not wisdom or courage in English statesmen to look the idol in the face. We may be put off with some insignificant attempt to give tenants the hope of compensation for "unexhausted improvements"—something which, ten years, or even two years ago, would have been valuable as a pledge of good will, a sign of just purposes, and a ground of hope that more would be done when experience had proved this to be insufficient; but which would not even then have been accepted as payment in full, and is now scarcely worth offering as an instalment. Even this, if proposed, ought to be voted for in preference to nothing. If a debtor acknowledges only sixpence when he owes a pound, he should be allowed to pay that sixpence; but let us not for a moment intermit the demand, that the remaining balance be paid up before the otherwise inevitable hour of bankruptcy arrives.

For let no one suppose that while this question remains as it is, the sum of all other things that could be done for Ireland would at all alleviate our difficulties there. Abundance of other things, indeed, require to be done. There are not only the religious endowments to be resumed, but their proceeds have to be applied, in the most effectual way possible, to the promotion of Irish improvement. The Church lands and tithes, augmented by the Maynooth endowment and the *regium donum*, would be more than enough, with the sums already appropriated to the purpose, to afford a complete unsectarian education to the entire people, including primary schools, middle schools, high schools, and universities, each grade to be open free of cost to the pupils who had most distinguished



themselves in the grade below it. The administration of local justice, of local finance, and other local affairs, requires the hand of the reformer even more urgently than in England. Such minor matters as, though of small account in themselves, would help to conciliate Irish feeling, ought not to be neglected. Those are not wrong who have urged that, with parity of qualifications, Irishmen (when not partisans) should have the preference for Irish appointments ; and there is no good reason why the heir to the throne should not, during part of every year, reside and hold a Court at Dublin. Those purely material improvements to which voluntary enterprise is not adequate, should, with due consideration and proper precautions, receive help from the State. The possible consolidation of Irish railways under State management, or under a single company by concession from the State, is already engaging the attention of our public men ; and advances for drainage, and other improvements on a large scale, are, in a country so poor and backward as Ireland, economically admissible : only not on the plan hitherto adopted, of lending to the landlords, that the entire benefit of the improvement may accrue to their rents. It is scarcely credible that a large extension of *such* advances has within the last few weeks been publicly propounded as a remedy for Fenianism and all other Irish ills, and that a bill for that purpose, promoted by the Government, is actually before Parliament. We have heard of people who would have cried fire during the Deluge : these people, if they had lived at the time of the Deluge, would have proposed to stop it by turning on a little more water.

But none of these things—not even the cashiering

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of the Irish Protestant Church—nor all these things taken together, could avail to stop the progress of Irish disaffection, because not one of them comes near its real cause. Matters of affronted feeling, and of minor or distant pecuniary interest, will occupy men's minds when the primary interests of subsistence and security have been cared for, and not before. Let our statesmen be assured that now, when the long deferred day of Fenianism has come, nothing which is not accepted by the Irish tenantry as a permanent solution of the land difficulty, will prevent Fenianism, or something equivalent to it, from being the standing torment of the English Government and people. If without removing this difficulty, we attempt to hold Ireland by force, it will be at the expense of all the character we possess as lovers and maintainers of free government, or respecters of any rights except our own; it will most dangerously aggravate all our chances of misunderstandings with any of the great powers of the world, culminating in war; we shall be in a state of open revolt against the universal conscience of Europe and Christendom, and more and more against our own. And we shall in the end be shamed, or, if not shamed, coerced, into releasing Ireland from the connexion; or we shall avert the necessity only by conceding with the worst grace, and when it will not prevent some generations of ill blood, that which if done at present may still be in time permanently to reconcile the two countries.

THE END.

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